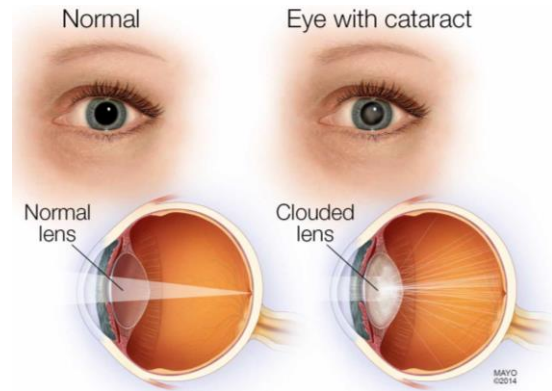


# Cataract

## What is cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the eye lens. The lens is the opening where light passes through the eye. It is normally clear and focuses the light onto the retina (back of the eye). A cloudy lens makes it hard for light to pass through. This causes problems with correctly focusing on the retina. Your vision may be cloudy, hazy, and blurred. A cataract may develop in one or both eyes.



## Risk factors

- Age 65 years or older
- A medical condition such as diabetes, low blood calcium, or high blood pressure
- A strong blow to the eye or if eyes being exposed to sunlight and x-rays
- An infection
- Steroid use, drinking too much alcohol, or smoking cigarettes
- Not enough vitamins, minerals, and protein in diet.
- Dehydration

## Signs and symptoms

- Increasing loss of vision
- Cloudy, foggy, fuzzy, or hazy blurring of vision
- Problems driving at night or in bright sunlight
- Double vision
- Problem seeing shades of colours

## Diagnosis

- A **visual acuity test** is used to check vision, eye pressure, and eye movements.
- **Ophthalmoscopy** is used to see the backside of eyes. Eye drops may be used to dilate pupils.
- A **slit-lamp test** is used to look into eye with a microscope with a strong light.

## Types of cataract

- **Secondary cataract.** Cataract can develop after surgery for other eye problems and who have other health problems, such as diabetes. Cataracts are sometimes linked to steroid use.
- **Traumatic cataract.** Cataracts can develop after an eye injury, sometimes years later.
- **Congenital cataract.** Some babies are born with cataracts or develop them in childhood, often in both eyes.
- **Radiation cataract.** Cataracts can develop after exposure to some types of radiation.

## Treatment

- **Glasses or contact lenses** may be able to correct vision.
- **Surgery** may be used to remove cataract. An artificial lens will be put into eye to replace the damaged lens.

## Clinical teaching:

- Wear sunglasses to protect eyes from the sunlight and prevent eye discomfort.
- Make sure the sunglasses have UV protection.

**Reference: Micromedex's Care Notes System Online 2.0**